IV. *On the true Date of the Rosetta Stone, and on the Inferences deducible from it.* By the Rev. Edward Hincks, D. D.

Read May 9, 1842.

In investigating the affairs of ancient nations by the help of the contemporary monuments that are yet in existence, there is no knowing beforehand how prolific a single truth may be; what a train of interesting and even important facts may be brought to our knowledge by combining that one truth with those that are already known. This should lead us to prize every new fact that can be ascertained, however unimportant it may appear in itself. And, on the other hand, a similar consideration should lead us to endeavour to correct every falsely assumed fact, no matter how trivial the error may appear; for falsehood is unfortunately as prolific as truth; and one falsehood, assumed as a fact, may give birth to errors without number.

A striking illustration of these general principles has lately occurred in M. Letronne's Edition of the Greek Inscription on the Rosetta Stone; in which, with the most perverse ingenuity, he draws inference after inference from the false date, which Dr. Young assigned to that monument; which inferences are all erroneous, and are in most cases the very reverse of those which should have been drawn.

The date, which Dr. Young erroneously assigned to that monument, was the 27th March, 196 B. C., according to the proleptic Julian reckoning; the true date was, according to the same reckoning, the 27th March, 197 B. C. I will first contrast the inferences which M. Letronne has drawn from Dr. Young's date, with the inferences that he would have drawn had he adopted the earlier date; placing, for greater clearness, the corresponding inferences, which are generally contradictory, in parallel columns. Having done this, I will bring forward reasons, on which I confidently pronounce it to be *impossible* that Dr. Young's date was the real date of the monument.

M. Letronne's inferences relate to the history of Epiphanes and to the mode of computing the years of his reign, and that of other Egyptian kings; and to the various priesthoods of royal personages that are mentioned on the Ptolemaic monuments. He begins with the latter of these; but it will be more convenient to take the former first. I will only premise that the ninth year of Epiphanes, according to Ptolemy's canon, and the Egyptian mode of dating, is admitted to have been that, the first day of which coincided with the 11th October, 197 B. C.

Assuming the Rosetta Stone to be dated in March, 196 B. C., M. Letronne infers:

1. That Philopator died in March, 204 B. C.

2. That Epiphanes was born in October, 209 B. C.

3. That the interval between Philopator's death in March, 204, and the 1st Thoth in the following October, was counted as the first year of Epiphanes.

4. That, as a general rule, the portion of a year which elapsed between a king's death and the 1st Thoth following, no matter how small it might be, was counted as the first year of his successor.

If, however, it were dated in March, 197 B. C., the inferences would be:

1. That Philopator died in March, 205 B. C. The decree bears date the day following the anniversary of his death; and, as it is said to be in his ninth year, while, according to the Egyptian computation, it was in his eighth, it must have been made on the day after the eighth anniversary of his death, when he had reigned eight complete years. It should be observed that the mention of the ninth year is in the Greek part of the inscription; the Egyptian date was on a part of the stone which is broken off.

2. That Epiphanes was born in October, 210 B. C.

3. That the interval between Philopator's death and the 1st Thoth following, was counted as a *continuation* of the 17th of Philopator, which began on the preceding 1st Thoth; and that the first year of Epiphanes did not commence until the 1st Thoth after his father's death.

4. That, in the case of a king succeeding peaceably to the throne in the latter part, or even in the middle of a year, the remainder of that year was called after his predecessor; and that his first year was not reckoned to begin till the 1st Thoth after his accession.

Previous to considering M. Letronne's inferences respecting the various royal priesthoods that are mentioned in Ptolemaic inscriptions, it will be right to mention the *data* which he uses in conjunction with the Rosetta Stone. There are

three papyri in the Egyptian Museum at Paris, bearing date in Epiphi of the seventh year of Philopator, i. e. in August, 216 B. C.; in Pharmuthi of the 8th of Epiphanes, i. e. in May, 197 B. C.; and in Paophi of the 21st of Epiphanes, i. e. in November, 185 B. C. The important point, in which M. Letronne has erred, is that he supposes the second of these papyri to be dated ten months before the Rosetta Stone, when it is really dated two months after it.

On the first of these papyri and on the Rosetta Stone, Aetes or Aetos is mentioned as priest of Alexander and of the other deified kings; while on the second of the papyri Demetrius is mentioned as filling that office. On the second and third papyri, as well as on the Rosetta Stone, Hirene is mentioned as priestess of Arsinoe Philopator; but the Athlophora of Berenice Evergetis and the Canephora of Arsinoe Philadelphe are different in all the documents; Aria, however, the Canephora of the Rosetta Stone, being the Athlophora of the second papyrus. The inferences then are as follows:

5. Demetrius being priest of the kings before the decree recorded on the Rosetta Stone, while Aetos was priest at the time of that decree, and also at a period previous to it, the office of priest of the kings was not a permanent one, but was probably annual.

5. Demetrius not being priest, so far as we know, till after Aetos had ceased to be so; there is no ground for supposing the office to be annual. Aetos probably held it from the commencement of the reign of Philopator till after the Rosetta decree. In the course of the next two months, he either died or was removed by the new sovereign, who, it will be recollected, assumed the reins of government at the date of that decree.

6. The offices of Athlophora, Canephora, and Priestess of Arsinoe, were all annual. It would be highly improbable, if this were not the case, that the persons holding them would in two out of the three cases, be changed during the short period of ten months.

6. There is no reason as yet for supposing that any of the royal priesthoods was annual. The changes which took place between the dates of the Rosetta Stone, and of the second papyrus, were such as it was highly probable would take place, if the office were held during pleasure, in the two months next following the attainment of his majority by a minor sovereign.

7. The office of Athlophora was not placed first, as being a more important office than that of Canephora; for Aria held the former office in 197, and the latter in the following year. M. Letronne conjectures that the reason for the for-

7. The office of Athlophora, being always placed before that of Canephora, was a more important office. Aria, who held the latter in March, 197, was promoted to the former before May in that year, the former Athlophora dying,

mer being always named before the latter was, that Epiphanes, or those who acted for him in his minority, had a particular regard for the memory of his grandmother.

or being removed by the new king. The idea of these offices being annual ones appears to have first occurred to M. Champollion Figeac; but it is not necessary to suppose them to be so, in order to explain the observed facts; and the contrary supposition seems on every account preferable.

I come now to state my reasons for maintaining, that the Rosetta Stone records a decree which was made in March, 197 B. C. The date of the decree is given according to the Greek and Egyptian computations, so far as respects the month and day. It was the 4th of Xanthicus, being the 18th of Mechir. Now I am going to show that these dates could not possibly coincide in the year 196 B. C.; but that they could and did coincide in the preceding year.

It has been proved by Archbishop Ussher, that the Macedonian year was a solar one, similar to that which was introduced at Rome by Julius Cæsar. As, however, some may doubt whether this solar year was in use so early a period as the date of the Rosetta Stone, and as it is generally believed that the Macedonians had also a lunar year; it will be necessary to show in the first place, that the 18th Mechir, that is, the 27th March, in the year 196 B. C., could not be the 4th of a lunar month. To do this, I need only quote M. Letronne's own words: "This year the full moon fell on the 29th March, or the 6th Xanthicus. The first of this month was then about the ninth day of the moon's age; whence it would follow that the calendar to which it belonged was not lunar, *unless this month was this year an intercalary one* (a moins que ce mois ne fût embolimique cette année)." The learned Frenchman has not explained how this removes the difficulty; though it is evident that he supposed it to do so. It is not very obvious how in any lunar calendar, whether the month was intercalary or not, the full moon could occur on the sixth day. In the preceding year the full moon fell on the 9th April; so that if the 27th March had been the fourth of a lunar month, the full moon would be on the 17th day of it. This is so much less astray from the correct time than in the year 196, that if it were certain that the Macedonian year were lunar, I think there could be no hesitation in fixing on the year 197 B. C., as that in which the fourth of a lunar month would coincide with the 18th Mechir. I am, however, decidedly of opinion, that the Macedo-

nian year was solar; and I find that, by supposing it to have been so, an exact coincidence between the two dates occurred in the four years 200, 199, 198, and 197 B. C., but not in 196, or in any other year.

That the Macedonian year was a solar one, subsequent to the Julian reformation of the Roman calendar, is unquestionable. What I contend for is, that it was so at the time of the Rosetta Stone, more than 150 years before that reformation; and the double date of that monument appears to me to establish this interesting fact in chronology. The mode of proceeding, in order to investigate this matter, is a simple and obvious one. I will take those dates of the Macedonian solar year, as it existed under the Romans, which are recorded as being coincident with dates of the Julian year, or of the fixed Alexandrian year, the correspondence of which with the Julian is known. From these dates, and the known lengths of the Macedonian and Julian months, it is easy to ascertain with what day of the Julian year any given day of the Macedonian year, say the 4th of Xanthicus, coincided in each of the four years of the Julian cycle; and it is obvious that this coincidence must remain unaltered, if we compare Macedonian years, actual or proleptic, *at any period*, with proleptic Julian years.

Now it has been shown by Archbishop Ussher, that the Macedonian year, as used in Asia generally, differed in certain respects from the Macedonian year, as used in Macedonia. The commencement of both years was at the autumnal equinox; but the first month of the Asiatics was Hyperberetæus, while that of the Macedonians proper was Dius. The same difference remained through the other months, Xanthicus being the sixth in Macedonia, but the seventh in Asia. It is natural to suppose that Egypt would follow the Asiatic system in preference to that of the Europeans; and this is confirmed by the Egyptian date, with which one of these Asiatic dates which I am going to produce is stated to correspond. These dates (which I take from the treatise of Archbishop Ussher, "de Macedonum et Asianorum anno solari;" a valuable work, with which neither Dr. Young nor M. Letronne could have been acquainted) are, first, that of the martyrdom of the Apostle St. Paul; which is stated by Euthalius to have occurred on the 29th June, A. D. 67, being the 5th Panemus. Xanthicus, Artemisius, and Dæsius had the same number of days as March, April, and May. Therefore the 29th March in that year coincided with the 5th Xanthicus, and, of course, the 28th March with the 4th Xanthicus.

The second date is that of the martyrdom of St. Polycarp, which is shown by the learned Archbishop to be assigned by the most correct copy of the Acts thereof to the 2nd Xanthicus, and 26th March, A. D. 169; being the day of the great Sabbath, or that Sabbath which occurred at the Passover. In that year, therefore, the 4th Xanthicus also coincided with the 28th March.

The third date is that of the burial of the younger Valentinian, which is stated by St. Epiphanius to have fallen on the 23rd Artemisius, being the 21st Pachon (of the fixed Alexandrian year) and the 16th May, A. D. 392; the latter days are known to correspond. This correspondence gives us for the 4th Xanthicus in that year the 27th March. It is, therefore, evident that in bissextile years, the 4th Xanthicus corresponded with the 27th March, and in the other three years of the Julian cycle with the 28th March. This is, in truth, nothing more than what has been expressly asserted by the Archbishop, who shows in his treatise (pp. 46, 47, Ed. 1648), that in bissextile years the month of Xanthicus, which he specially notices on account of its connexion with Easter, began on the 24th March, and in the other three years on the 25th.

Now, as the year 197 B. C. was proleptically bissextile, according to the Julian computation, the 4th Xanthicus must in that year have coincided with the 27th March, and therefore with the 18th Mechir. In the three preceding years it would also coincide with the 18th Mechir, both dates coinciding with the 28th March; but in the following year, 196 B. C., and those after it, the 18th Mechir would coincide with the 27th March, while the 4th Xanthicus would coincide with the 28th.

It appears to me that this amounts to a complete demonstration, that the true date of the Rosetta Stone was 197 B. C., and that the date assigned to it by M. Letronne after Dr. Young was erroneous. Consequently, the seven inferences drawn by M. Letronne must be rejected; and the seven others, in most cases contradictory, which I have placed in the parallel columns, must be substituted for them.